

Mono County Community Development Department

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW INFORMATION

Projects requiring a discretionary decision by Mono County must be reviewed for potential significant environmental impacts, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Discretionary decisions are those in which the County can use its judgment in deciding whether and how to carry out or approve a project. The purpose of the environmental review process is to:

- A. Identify potential significant environmental effects of proposed projects.
- B. Identify ways environmental impacts can be avoided or significantly reduced.
- C. Prevent significant avoidable impacts to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when such changes are found to be feasible.

Planning staff will determine whether a proposed project is exempt from CEQA or requires an environmental evaluation. If a project is not exempt, an Initial Study will be prepared using information submitted by the applicant on the Project Information form. The Initial Study determines whether a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required for a project.

NEGATIVE DECLARATION: A written statement describing why a proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and therefore will not require an EIR. Mitigated Negative Declarations may identify potentially significant impacts and how to avoid or mitigate those impacts to a point where no significant impacts will occur. Negative Declarations can usually be processed more quickly and at a lower cost than Environmental Impact Reports.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR): A detailed document that analyzes the significant environmental effects of a project and discusses ways to mitigate or avoid those effects. Complex projects usually require an EIR.

CEQA encourages project proponents to incorporate environmental constraints and considerations into projects at the earliest feasible time. The Initial Study process enables the applicant to modify a project to mitigate adverse impacts before an environmental determination is made, thereby enabling the project to qualify for a Negative Declaration. If an EIR is required, the Initial Study assists in the preparation of the EIR by focusing the EIR.

A project applicant can streamline the environmental review process significantly by submitting a thorough and accurate Project Information form. If this form is not completed accurately or thoroughly, environmental review of a project may be delayed so the Planning Division can gather additional information. Project review will also be streamlined if the Project Information Form discusses methods to avoid or mitigate the potential adverse environmental impacts identified in the Project Information form.